

# VA SENIOR EXECUTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2772) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for requirements relating to the reassignment of Department of Veterans Affairs senior executive employees, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2772

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

## SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “VA Senior Executive Accountability Act” or the “SEA Act”.

## SEC. 2. SEMIANNUAL REPORTS ON REASSIGNMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SENIOR EXECUTIVE EMPLOYEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

### “§ 723. Reassignment of senior executives

“(a) APPROVAL OF REASSIGNMENTS.—No individual employed in a senior executive position at the Department may be reassigned to another such position at the Department unless such reassignment is approved in writing and signed by the Secretary.

“(b) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than June 30 and December 31 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the reassignment of individuals employed in senior executive positions at the Department to other such positions at the Department during the period covered by the report. Each such report shall describe the purpose of each such reassignment and the costs associated with such reassignment.

“(c) SENIOR EXECUTIVE POSITION DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘senior executive position’ has the meaning given such term in section 713(g)(3) of this title.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 723 the following new item:

“724. Reassignment of senior executives.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2772, as amended, the VA Senior Executive Accountability Act, or SEA Act. This bill would provide needed transparency of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ reassignment of members of the Senior Executive Service. Specifically, the bill would require

the Secretary to personally approve of a reassignment of VA’s approximately 350 SES employees.

It would also require VA to report to Congress identifying those employees who are reassigned and the cost associated with reassignments.

I thank Representative TAYLOR for his thoughtful legislation. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2772.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2772, the VA Senior Executive Accountability Act. Mr. Speaker, this is a commonsense bill that has received bipartisan support as it moved through regular order of our committee.

This bill requires that any reassignment of a senior executive at the VA have the Secretary’s written approval. It also requires an annual report to Congress to help us in our oversight ability.

I have dealt with this issue myself in Minnesota and know firsthand how important this is.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. TAYLOR and our vice ranking member, Mr. TAKANO, for developing this legislation. I support and encourage Members to join in its support.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TAYLOR), the author of this bill and a Navy SEAL.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 2772, the VA Senior Executive Accountability Act.

This bipartisan bill brings transparency and accountability to senior VA leadership.

Mr. Speaker, my area has the fastest growing veterans population in the Nation. Our OIF, our OEF, and our women’s veterans population is rapidly growing.

Recently, our main VA hospital was rated at a one-star out of a five-star rating. In making a change, the VA simply swapped out the underperforming leadership with another VA hospital.

This, Mr. Speaker, is unacceptable.

My bill would require the VA to issue reports on any reassignment of VA leadership and how much the cost is. Additionally, the Secretary of the VA would have to personally sign off on the reassignment.

Mr. Speaker, veterans need to trust that they are getting the best care possible. They need to trust that they will have transparency. They need to trust that there will be accountability.

I want to thank the chairman, the ranking member, and all those on the committee for their work, their dedication, and their commitment to upholding our sacred responsibility of care for those who upheld their own sacred responsibility to our Nation.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close at this time.

Mr. Speaker, again, commonsense bill, bipartisan, does the right thing, and, as the gentleman so clearly explained, providing that trust to our veterans is absolutely critical. I believe this will do that. I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 2772.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2772, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## GROW OUR OWN DIRECTIVE: PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3262) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide educational assistance to certain former members of the Armed Forces for education and training as physician assistants of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to establish pay grades and require competitive pay for physician assistants of the Department, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3262

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

## SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Grow Our Own Directive: Physician Assistant Employment and Education Act of 2017”.

## SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS TO BE EMPLOYED AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to be known as the “Grow Our Own Directive” or “G.O.O.D.” pilot program (in this section referred to as the “pilot program”) to provide educational assistance to certain former members of the Armed Forces for education and training as physician assistants of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) INFORMATION ON PILOT PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall provide information on the pilot program to eligible individuals under subsection (b), including information on application requirements and a list of entities with which the Secretary has partnered under subsection (g).

(b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—An individual is eligible to participate in the pilot program if the individual—